

Over its 40 years Radio KAUR has had 'ups and downs'

Augustana's much traveled campus radio station, KAUR-FM, has moved once again and general manager Jim Barkley, a Sioux Falls senior, couldn't be happier. On Dec. 21, while most students were enjoying a Christmas break, the station crew packed up and moved from its aerie on the top floor of Old Main to the first floor (north end) of Tuve Hall.

The new studio includes a newly remodeled control room, newsroom, production room and staff offices. New equipment, purchased in recent years, has given KAUR a top-of-the-line control board as well as important additions to the studio and production room.

In the fall of 1986 KAUR had purchased a new transmitter and began broadcasting with Minnesota Public Radio's South Dakota station KRSD from a taller tower atop Stavig Hall's eight story mass.

During the December move the station was off the air for about two days and, while the move was hard work, Barkley

said it was simply a matter of signing off the air and then cutting wires loose and hauling equipment down the Old Main stairs.

While the studio may have a few rough edges, Barkley says he is very pleased. He also commented that he has visited several other radio stations in Sioux Falls and KAUR has "all the equipment of any other radio station. I would say any station in town would be proud to have a studio like ours, and it looks a whole lot nicer than a lot I've seen," he said.

The only disappointment was trouble with the new transmitter that provided a power increase to 680 watts in November of 1986. Two days after the move the engineers discovered a problem that forced the station to decrease its power to the reduced signal they had been broadcasting at previously. This, however, proved to be only a minor setback and was quickly corrected.

Radio at Augustana began 40 years ago

in 1947 with a student-run AM carrier current station, KOLE-AM 690 and was housed in a homemade studio in the basement of The Cottage (the present Central Services Building). The station could only be heard on campus and was on the air one hour a day.

In 1948 the station changed its call letters to KAUR and programming was expanded to 22 hours a week. The station moved to a greenhouse south of the Administration Building but was closed in 1958 due to lack of staff, failing equipment, and a leaky roof.

In 1971 the Augustana College Association recognized the rise of 10-watt educational FM stations around the country and applied for a construction permit from the Federal Communications Commission and received permission to develop a station.

KAUR-FM began broadcasting in 1972 from a studio located in Viking Villa, an Army surplus building located west of the present Stavig Hall.

The next move of the station was in the summer of 1976 when the facility was moved to the top floor of Old Main and its broadcast hours were expanded. The next major change came in 1981 when KAUR increased its broadcast power to 380 watts and began broadcasting 24 hours a day.

KAUR is financed by Augustana, program sponsors, and listeners. It provides an alternative broadcast service to the campus community, Sioux Falls residents, and the surrounding communities. The specially tailored format consists of the area's only progressive rock, jazz, and Christian music, as well as special features — local and network news, live coverage of Augustana sports, student congregation, and daily chapel services.

The station provides 75 to 100 students per semester with realistic, professional broadcast experience and many of its alumni have gone on to fulltime careers in the broadcast field.